



**What they
can do for
you.**

**What
they are.**

PROCESSED PRODUCTS BRANCH PLANT SURVEYS

A Processed Products Branch (PPB) plant survey consists of an on-site evaluation of a food processing facility to assess the facility's compliance with current Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP's). The results of a plant survey can serve several purposes including: (1) to determine whether a food processing facility is adequate and acceptable for food production on a contract basis; (2) to determine whether a facility qualifies for PPB in-plant inspection; and (3) as a source of objective information about a facility's operations which can be of interest to plant management and/or to the firm's trading partner(s). Plant surveys and related inspection services are available on a fee basis from USDA's Processed Products Branch.

Plant surveys may be conducted for:

- Fruit and vegetable processing facility management interested in incorporating official USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) quality grading in the production facility on a contract basis;
- New successful bidders who wish to sign a USDA/AMS contract for delivery of food products;
- Successful bidders who have had contracts on a continuing basis;
- Potential bidders who wish to demonstrate their plant's current status prior to contracts being awarded; and/or
- Fruit and vegetable processing facility management interested in having an independent, unbiased, third party evaluation of their facility for other marketing purposes.

Plant surveys may be conducted for compliance with food contracts for:

- USDA purchases (AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Commodity Procurement Branch);
- State procurements (such as school food service); and/or
- Local or independent entity purchases.

Plant surveys:

- Provide an unbiased third party inspection of a food processor's facilities;
- Are conducted during actual production; and
- Document deficiencies found during the plant survey.

Plant surveys are used to:

- Provide information to the management of a food processing facility regarding their facility's compliance with GMP's;
- Report plant survey findings, including any deficiencies identified to plant management; and
- If needed, discuss follow-up corrective actions.

Plant surveys consider the following:

- Plant organization, management, and program information;
- Plant facilities, equipment, and environmental factors; and
- Plant operational conditions, including personnel hygiene.

Plant surveys include assessment of the following:

- Plant construction and design;
- Processing area, equipment and facilities;
- Sanitation;
- Warehouse and storage facilities;
- Receiving area;
- Premises (parking lot and yard area);

[more](#)



PROCESSED PRODUCTS BRANCH PLANT SURVEYS (Continued)

Essential Requirements

Plant surveys include assessment of the following: (Continued)

- Water supply;
- Waste disposal;
- Personnel policies;
- Laboratory facilities; and
- Toilet facilities.

Plant survey essential requirements are based on compliance with GMP's. Requirements include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Manufacturing practices that prevent product contamination are to be in place. This includes overhead areas to be free from flaking paint, dust, condensate, and dirt;
- Non-wood, non-corrosive material is to be used on all surfaces which come in direct contact with product;
- Adequate time and proper equipment is to be provided for an effective clean up during shifts and between shifts;
- All exterior openings of the preparation and packaging rooms are to be enclosed or screened (effective air screens) to protect product from birds, insects, rodents, and other vermin;
- Floors and gutters are to be constructed to drain well and be free of pitting or cracks which prevent proper cleaning. Wide and deep cracks and extremely rough sections which are difficult to clean must be repaired or replaced;
- Lights above all product lines are to be shielded or shatterproof;
- Can cleaners (steam, air, or water) are to be on each line for glass, tin, and semi-rigid containers;
- Screened, vented toilet facilities are to be designed so they do not open directly into rooms where products are handled;
- Parking lots and drives are to be surfaced or treated to control dust and dirt; and
- Waste material is to be removed in a timely manner.

How to apply?

For additional information regarding plant surveys or to apply for services, please contact:

Chief
Processed Products Branch
Fruit and Vegetable Programs
Agricultural Marketing Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Room 0709-S, Stop 0247
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Washington, DC 20250-0247
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